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Question Time: Should we adopt metric system?

Should U.S. customary units be scrapped?

**By Rob Burgess
Tribune night editor**

[Editor's note: To participate in future queries, keep an eye on our Twitter and Facebook accounts.]

Before dropping out of the race for the Democratic nomination for president Oct. 23, former Rhode Island Gov. Lincoln Chafee distinguished himself as an outsider candidate in many ways. Perhaps one of his most innovative proposals was for America to switch away from the U.S. customary units system and move to the metric system.

“Chafee framed his push for a switch to metric as a way for the U.S. to improve its status in a world where every country except Liberia and Myanmar uses the metric system,” reported MSNBC’s Alex Seitz-Wald on June 10. “Despite that goal, it’s hard to find anyone — including metric advocates — taking Chafee’s proposal seriously. ... When the Federal Highway Administration announced in 1977 that it was going to start putting kilometers on signs, it was inundated with 6,000 public letters, many from people who saw the system as communist plot. ‘This change to

the Metric System is just part of the Communist Diversionary to keep our country in an uproar,' wrote a man from Kansas City. Conservatives and even anti-establishment liberals clubbed Jimmy Carter with metric, and when Reagan essentially killed the conversion in 1982, the board responsible for pushing metrification conceded there was 'overwhelming' opposition."

So, we wanted to know: "Should the U.S. convert to the metric system? Why or why not?"

YOUR ANSWERS

"No. Instead of us following the rest of the world let them follow us." —

Vicci Lucas

"No. Why change now?" — **Helen Perry**

"Absolutely!" — **Scott Hersberger**

OUR ANSWERS

"We should use the Southern metric system. A tidge is 2.4 teaspoons. Yonder is 4.2 miles. Tornadoes are measured by the Katy Bar the Door system. And the Universe is 75 billion a'whiles old." — **Steve Mullen**

"Hmm ... Math has never been my strong suit, regardless of the system at hand. I say 'Go for it!'" — **Autumn Ricketts**

“Our system makes no sense. It’s totally arbitrary and based on seemingly random units. At least the metric system works on the deca system. But, there are other issues I care way more about with an equally vanishingly small chance of ever coming to fruition, so I’m willing to continue quietly grumbling to myself on this one.” — **Rob Burgess**

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